

WASHINGTON, DC -- The U.S. House of Representatives today passed an anti-gang amendment by Congresswoman Linda Sánchez (D-Lakewood) and Congressman Alcee Hastings (D-FL). The Hastings-Sánchez amendment, which was attached to the higher education reauthorization bill that was approved by the House today, provides for a national pilot program creating partnerships between community colleges and juvenile detention centers to reduce recidivism rates through education, vocational training and counseling.

“The State of California is going to spend \$9 billion on incarceration costs this year, yet gang activity continues to rise,” Rep. Linda Sánchez, a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor, said. “Our amendment provides new solutions to turn around the lives of young people who have started down the wrong path.”

The amendment will:

- * Authorize the Secretary of Education to award grants to community colleges for academic partnerships with juvenile detention centers to teach job skills to ex-offenders, facilitating a smooth re-entry into society.
- * Promote partnerships between community colleges and local agencies to promote strategies that divert at-risk youth from gangs, including academic, vocational and professional development opportunities, as well as apprenticeships and permanent employment opportunities.
- * Create individualized mentoring relationships between youthful ex-offenders enrolled in the program and law enforcement officials and guidance counselors to improve gang deterrence activities and reduce recidivism.

The amendment was endorsed by the American Association of Community Colleges and the American Psychological Association.

Congresswoman Sánchez is in her third term in the U.S. House of Representatives and is the only Democrat from the greater Los Angeles area who currently serves on the House Committee on Education and Labor.